

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases, comprising:

a columnar body comprising a plurality of porous ceramic members, each of said porous ceramic members comprising silicon carbide and having a plurality of through holes extending in parallel with one another in a length direction of said columnar body and a wall portion interposed between said through holes, said wall portion being configured to collect particles in exhaust gases; and

a plurality of plugs comprising silicon carbide and filling ones of said through holes at one end of said columnar body and other ones of said through holes at the other end of said columnar body,

wherein said columnar body has a porosity which is in a range from 20 to 80%, said plugs have a porosity which is 90% or less, and said porosity of said plugs is set to 0.15 to 4.0 times of said porosity of said columnar body.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases according to claim 1, wherein said porosity of said plugs is set to 0.25 to 1.5 times of said porosity of said columnar body.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases according to claim 1 or 2, further comprising a catalyst supported by said columnar body.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases according to claim 3, further comprising a catalyst supporting film provided over a surface of said columnar body.

Claims 5-6 (canceled)

Claim 7 (previously presented): The honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases according to claim 1, wherein said columnar body comprises a sealing material layer combining said porous ceramic members.

Claim 8 (new): The honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases according to claim 1, further comprising:

a casing covering a peripheral portion of said columnar body;

a holding sealing material structure provided between said columnar body and said casing; and

a heating device positioned on an inlet side of said columnar body and configured to heat the exhaust gases such that said columnar body is heated to burn and remove the particles accumulated in said wall portion.

Claim 9 (new): The honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases according to claim 1, further comprising:

a casing covering a peripheral portion of said columnar body;

a holding sealing material structure provided between said columnar body and said casing; and

a heat generating device positioned on an inlet side of said columnar body and configured to generate heat such that said columnar body is heated to burn and remove the particles accumulated in said wall portion.

Claim 10 (new): The honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases according to claim 1, further comprising:

a casing covering a peripheral portion of said columnar body;

a holding sealing material structure provided between said columnar body and said casing; and

a heat generating device supported by said columnar body and configured to generate heat such that said columnar body is heated to burn and remove the particles accumulated in said wall portion.

Claim 11 (new): The honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases according to claim 9, wherein said heat generating device comprises an oxidizing catalyst.

Claim 12 (new): The honeycomb filter for purifying exhaust gases according to claim 10, wherein said heat generating device comprises an oxidizing catalyst.